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RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL, ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Written statement submitted by Romani Union, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[24 January 1991]

1. The Romani Union, representing well over 15 million Roma (including Gypsy Sinti, etc.) throughout the world through their national and regional organizations, strongly feels that, to ensure to the whole human family a dignified existence, the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religous and linguistic minorities can best and soonest be guaranteed through education.

2. In this connection, we wish to quote from The Promise of World Peace:

"The cause of univeral education, which has already enlisted in its service an army of dedicated people from every faith and nation, deserves the utmost support that the Governments of the world can lend it. For ignorance is indisputably the principal reason for the decline and fall of peoples and the perpetuation of prejudice. No nation can achieve success unless education is accorded to all its citizens. Lack of resources limits the ability of many nations to fulfil this necessity, imposing a certain ordering of priorities. The decision-making agencies involved would do well to consider giving first priority to the education of women and girls, since it is through educated mothers that the benefits of knowledge can be effectively and rapidly diffused throughout society. In keeping with the requirements of the times, consideration should also be given to teaching the concept of world citizenship as part of the standard education of every child.

"A fundamental lack of communication between peoples seriously undermines efforts towards world peace. Adopting an international auxiliary language would go far toward resolving this problem and necessitates the most urgent attention."

(The Promise of World Peace, a statement by the Universal House of Justice, Baha'i World Centre, p.12, ISBN 085398-216-3).

3. Among its members, the Romani Union uses its own ancient international auxiliary language: an example nations might soon wish to follow and thus contribute to reducing human rights violations.

4. As Roma, Gypsy, Sinti do have their own unique national, ethnic, religious and linguistic heritage, unity in diversity, they do long to stop encountering prejudice everywhere and start living in a world where they are respected as world citizens. They thus greatly welcome the efforts of the Commission on Human Rights and especially look forward to the World Conference on Human Rights.

5. Despite the constant remarkable progress made, thanks especially to the efforts of the United Nations, there is much prejudice to dispel and genocide attempts to prevent! - The Romani Union is thus most grateful to all who actively contribute to overcoming prejudice and so reduce human rights violations, thus making our planet Earth a safe and happy place for all future generations.